

***Minnie Mine: Upper Tunnel
Site 5ST1167***

The Minnie Mine was a long-lived producer that consisted of an upper tunnel near the north rim of French Gulch and a main complex on the gulch floor. The upper tunnel (5ST1167) was among the mine's earliest workings, which were undercut at depth by a lengthy tunnel driven from a main complex (5ST1145). Currently, the upper tunnel complex includes a tunnel, its waste rock dump, and a standing cabin. The site lies on the north rim of French Gulch at 10,570 feet elevation in the McKay Mining District. The steep wall of French Gulch, vegetated with a second-growth lodgepole pine forest, surrounds the site. Within the last thirty years, squatters lived on the site and impacted the historical integrity. Because few unaltered historic features remain, the site was not recorded in detail.

Minnie Mine: Upper Tunnel Site Description

In general, the site is around 165 by 240 feet in area and lies on a heavily prospected mountainside. The historic features include a tunnel, which collapsed, leaving an area of subsidence 6 feet wide and around 30 feet long. The waste rock dump, 165 by 240 feet in area, manifests as a fan of lobes radiating outward from the tunnel portal. Miners graded the dump's top-surface flat and apparently sorted through the flanks for low-grade ore as part of later operations. The remnants of a foundation for an ore bin lie at the dump's toe, and they consist of jumbled logs. The foundation is incomplete and does not clearly represent the bin.

Since the late 1960s, people have heavily impacted the site in conjunction with seasonal, recreational residence. They repaired, refitted, and modified a frame cabin that was apparently historic and stands west of the tunnel. Changes include foamed and insulated walls, additional siding, new windows, and a shed mudroom, none of which match the original structure's materials and workmanship. As a result of the modifications, the cabin retains little historic integrity. Residents erected a privy over the collapsed tunnel portal, and built a storage shed between the cabin and tunnel portal. Recreationists built a fire ring on the waste rock dump to burn refuse and dumped non-perishable trash into a crook in the waste rock dump. Overall, the site retains few historic features, an incomplete artifact assemblage, and compromised historical integrity.

Minnie Mine: Upper Tunnel Site Significance and Management Recommendations

Today, the site retains little historical integrity due to seasonal recreational residence. For this reason, the site is no longer a viable entity and retains no significance. Management recommendations suggest no further consideration as a cultural resource.